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IEMA Highlights Preparedness for People with Access and Functional Needs in May

***Ready Illinois website offers emergency preparedness tips for people
with functional needs and their caregivers***

SPRINGFIELD – The minutes and hours following a disaster can be scary and stressful for anyone. Emergency preparedness, such as a home emergency supply kit and a plan for how family members will communicate in a disaster, can ease post-disaster stress. For households with members who have disabilities, functional needs or may need assistance during an emergency, disaster preparedness can be a matter of life or death.

Throughout May, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies will highlight the importance of disaster preparedness for people with functional and access needs.

“Illinois is susceptible to many types of hazards, such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, floods, and ice storms, that can create dangerous situations, particularly for those who may need some type of assistance,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “We have information that can help people and their caregivers take actions to help them stay safe during and after a disaster.”

Joseph said the Ready Illinois website offers a guidebook with preparedness tips for people with visual, cognitive or mobility impairments; people who are deaf or hard of hearing; those who utilize service animals or life support systems; and senior citizens. The guide, *Emergency Preparedness Tips for Those with Functional Needs*, is available at www.Ready.Illinois.gov.

For each functional need, the guidebook provides a list of supplemental items for a disaster kit, tips on developing an emergency plan, suggestions on how to be better informed about community emergency planning and a checklist of preparedness activities.

The Ready Illinois website also offers more than two dozen preparedness videos in American Sign Language on such topics as what to do before, during and after tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flooding, how to build an emergency supply kit, and what to do if you’re instructed to evacuate. The videos were developed in collaboration with the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission.

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